

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool, comprising:
a push or pull rod (7) to which a movable jaw (13) is fixed;
a stationary jaw (5);
a gear mechanism by which the movable jaw (13) is movable towards or away from the stationary jaw (5) by displacement of the push or pull rod (7) in a clamping or spreading direction (S) and by which clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading forces are ~~applicable~~ applied between the jaws (5, 13), further comprising:
a lock ~~with that~~ that blocks displacement of the push or pull rod (7) in an opening direction (O) opposite to the clamping or spreading direction (S) so as to maintain the clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading forces generated between the jaws (5, 13); and ~~characterized in that~~ a force dissipating mechanism for dissipating the clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading forces stored that allows absorption displacement of the push or pull rod (7) in the opening direction (O) along a predetermined absorption path and, ~~especially releasably,~~ blocks absorption of the push or pull rod (7) in the opening direction (O) beyond the predetermined absorption path upon release of the lock.
2. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the force dissipating mechanism is adapted to be activated, especially by an operator such that, upon activation, the absorption displacement of the push or pull rod (7) in the opening direction (O) along the absorption path is allowed independently and, after the absorption displacement, an absorption displacement limitation takes hold automatically.
3. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2,~~

~~characterized that wherein~~ the force dissipating mechanism can be activated only upon release of the blocking effect of the lock.

4. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 3~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the force dissipating mechanism can be activated when clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading forces are held at the lock.

5. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 4~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the force dissipating mechanism is or remains deactivated when the clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool (1) is not tensioned.

6. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 5~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the lock is shiftable essentially in the opening direction ~~(O)~~ with respect to the stationary jaw (5), while maintaining its blocking effect, so as to provide the absorption displacement.

7. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 1 ~~to 6~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the lock is arranged in a support in such a way as to be shiftable in the opening direction ~~(O)~~ while its blocking effect is upheld, the support carrying the stationary jaw (5) and holding the push or pull rod for displacement.

8. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 6 ~~or 7~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the lock is shiftable from a resting position in which it is, especially forcibly, adjusted upon activation of the force dissipating mechanism, into an absorption end position.

9. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 6 ~~to 8~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ shiftable of the lock is limited, ~~especially~~ by an abutment ~~(69)~~ formed on the support.

10. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of claims 6 to 9, characterized in that~~ wherein the shift distance travelled by the lock during absorption displacement substantially equals predetermined absorption path.

11. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 10, characterized in that~~ wherein the force dissipating mechanism comprises a drive for shifting the lock, with the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ locked to the same, essentially in opening direction.

12. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a drive to be implemented by an operator is provided and preferably comprises an eccentric bearing for the lock, or that at least part of the clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading forces can be introduced into the lock to be shifted, for implementation of the drive.

13. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that~~ wherein the lock is formed by a plate-type lock which is forcibly canted with respect to the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ to block displacement of the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ in the opening direction ~~(Θ)~~.

14. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the force dissipating mechanism comprises two plate-type locks, one of which is shiftable with respect to the stationary jaw ~~(5)~~ essentially in the opening direction ~~(Θ)~~ for providing the absorption displacement while the forced canting with respect to the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ is upheld, whereas the other one is arranged stationarily with respect to the stationary jaw ~~(5)~~, maintaining the forced canting with respect to the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~.

15. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the forced canting of the stationary plate-type lock can be lifted before the forced canting of the shiftable plate-type lock.

16. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 14 ~~or~~ 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading forces released upon lifting of the forced canting of the stationary plate-type lock can be introduced into the shiftable plate-type lock such that the shiftable plate-type lock, together with the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ canted with respect to the same, are shifted from a starting position into an end position at which further shifting is prevented.

17. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 14 to 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the shiftable plate-type lock comprises a wedging plate which is forcibly canted to the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ so that displacement of the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ in the opening direction (Θ) with respect to the wedging plate is blocked, said wedging plate contacting a movable place for engagement.

18. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the wedging plate constitutes an entraining slide element ~~(27)~~ of the gear mechanism designed as a stepping gear, and the movable place for engagement is presented by the location of power transmission from the entraining slide element ~~(27)~~ into a movable, especially swingable actuating arm ~~(19)~~ of the stepping gear.

19. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 18, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the actuating arm ~~(19)~~ has a mid position at which the actuating arm ~~(19)~~ is positioned when unloaded, a stroke end position into which the actuating arm ~~(19)~~ can be moved when actuated by an operator to displace the push or pull rod ~~(7)~~ in the clamping or spreading direction (S), and an absorption end position, opposed to the stroke end position, into which the actuating arm ~~(19)~~ can be moved for shifting the entraining slide element ~~(27)~~, while maintaining the forced canting thereof, and at which the actuating arm ~~(19)~~ strikes against an abutment ~~(69)~~ present on the support for providing limitation of the absorption displacement.

20. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 1 to 19, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the force dissipating mechanism comprises a

damper which dampens the absorption displacement of the push or pull rod-(7)-along the absorption path.

21. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 20, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the damper is activated only when the force dissipating mechanism for absorption displacement of the push or pull rod (7)-is the opening direction-(Θ) is activated.

22. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 20 ~~or~~ 21, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the damper is formed by a centering spring (61), especially a compression spring adapted to be tensioned by shifting of the lock essentially in the opening direction (Θ).

23. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 22, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the centering spring-(61) is disposed between a support which holds the stationary jaw-(5) and the actuating arm-(19).

24. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in claim 22 ~~or~~ 23, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the centering spring (61)-and a gear spring for canting the entraining slide element (27)-are harmonized such that the actuating arm (19)-is forcibly positioned in a mid position out of which lifting motion for the gear mechanism contrary to the gear spring and absorption motion for the force dissipating mechanism contrary to the centering spring (61)-are allowed.

25. (Currently Amended) The clamping ~~and/or~~ or spreading tool as claimed in ~~any one of~~ claims 22 to 24, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the centering spring (61)-tensioned in the absorption end position of the actuating arm (19)-can be relieved of tension by lifting the forced canting of the entraining slide element-(27), the relaxing centering spring-(61), at the same time, especially urging the actuating arm-(19) into the mid position.